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Turner takes the big dip

In that constellation of men who wore stars on their uniforms before going into high government jobs, Stanfield Turner is destined to become one of the last of the Big Dippers.

Many a flag-rank officer before Admiral Turner has gone to work in the federal hierarchy, earning good salaries and building up civil pension credits while drawing retirement pay.

That's called double-dipping. A longtime source of irritation to taxpayers, it was ended by the last Congress for any military officer who retires after Jan. 10.

Turner, a Naval Academy classmate of Jimmy Carter who was the president's choice to succeed George Bush as director of the Central

Intelligence Agency, is giving up his active naval status today. He thereby beats the deadline, allowing him to collect \$20,000 annually in retirement pay, along with his \$57,500 CIA salary.

Closing that loophole was a long-overdue reform. But anyone disposed to criticize Turner for getting in on the double dip while it is still permitted should ask himself if he would have given up \$20,000 a year to demonstrate principle beyond the call of duty.

For that matter, the \$57,500 is rather modest pay for an agency head with the critical responsibilities borne by the CIA director. If we were satisfied with the product, we would be happy to see the head man collect \$77,500 tax dollars each year.